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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that context is an important factor to be considered in linguistic analysis. Context is defined as the aggregate of linguistic, situational, social and cultural variables that surround linguistic units such as texts, discourses, utterances, words, morphemes, phonemes, sounds, and distinctive features. A "textual context" is the set of suitable defined linguistic units that co-occur with a given linguistic unit within a given text. In addition, the following contexts may be discerned: situational, social, cultural, pragmatic, and the psychological. Contextual features must be distinguished as being stylistically significant or non-significant. Another fundamental distinction must be made between language and context. Language teachers have increasingly become aware of the importance of stylistic contexts, so that the acquisition of stylistic appropriateness in a range of contexts is included among the objectives of language teaching. (AM)

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Style and Types of Context

by

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I

Context in the wide sense includes both the textual and the situational envelopes of linguistic units in discourse, and is a subject beyond exhausting in a single article. In fact a survey of the treatments of contexts in stylistics, linguistics, sociology, logic, the theory and criticism of literature, and other related disciplines would amount to little less than a full history of all these subjects. The reason for this is simple indeed. As soon as a student of language becomes preoccupied with linguistic varieties, he can no longer avoid bringing in contexts: he must ask when, where, by whom, and under what circumstances these varieties are, or were, used. The student of literature is similarly engaged in the scrutiny of the social environments of literary texts, of literary traditions and genres, and of a multiplicity of problems involving context. Even the logician assessing truth values of propositions such as "It is raining" or "There are elephants here" must concern himself with the time and place of the speech act in which these propositions were made.

All the same, many students of language have deliberately adopted working hypotheses that shut out contexts from their field of vision. This policy springs from a laudable desire to reduce the number of independent variables, a procedure linguists have learned from their colleagues in the exact natural sciences. It owes largely to the precision-loving linguists' reluctance to bog down in descriptions of the world's endlessly varied socio-physical settings. But it readily leads to a study of languages as something comparable to closed systems which are isolated from their environment. The temptation is particularly strong for students of grammar lexis being by nature more open than syntax. Assuming that language can be regarded as a homogeneous and static set of units, structures and rules, a linguist will find it possible to describe it in a single, monolectal (as opposed to poly-

lectal) grammar. Note, however, that such a view does not restrict the linguist to the setting-up of taxonomies that cover merely what happens to occur in a given corpus of texts. Closed systems can readily be described by techniques that allow predictions of what happens in an open corpus, as in generative -transformational grammar. Here it is the linguistic system rather than the corpus that is viewed as closed.

We should beware of pushing the analogy between closed and open systems, and different views of language, too far. In fact steady states can exist in open systems too, in spite of the inflow and outflow, building up and breaking down of units: in open systems, various compensatory mechanisms make it possible to reach and maintain the same final state from different inputs and in different ways (von Bertalanffy 1973: 38-39). Yet the fact remains that one strong trend has been to describe languages as single, homogeneous systems, and to disregard that constant interaction with social (including historical) and psychological forces which compels systematic variation, flux and change. By postulate, linguists of this persuasion have looked away from both historical change and synchronic variation, two major manifestations of systematic openness in language. Though it would be unjust to equate the relationship between closed-system-dominated and open-system-dominated linguistics directly with the classic dichotomies of language and parole, jazyk and řeč, competence and performance, it is worth noting that such concepts have helped linguists to avoid analyses of cumbersome variation. They have made it possible to dismiss certain kinds of variation as mere parole or performance, and to transfer awkward problems from one's own in-tray into somebody else's.

Though the analyses of languages as homogeneous analogues of closed systems have greatly increased our knowledge of how languages work, there is little reason to pretend that they can tell us all about language. The balanced view is surely that linguistics must be concerned with linguistic variation in all its complexity, including possible instances of indeterminacy and flux. But for certain purposes it is advantageous or even necessary as a heuristic device to isolate problems by disregarding such

complexities.

There is yet another reason why contexts are important, and this reason appears from a glance at the history of linguistics. Often data that were once regarded as an indeterminate residue which one might call 'free variation' have been later explained in terms of categorical rules and a deterministic rationale. In fact one of the effects of progress in linguistics has been a reduction of the area of free variation, and a description of the range and nature of that residue of free variation that resists strict categorical rules. This process usually brings in new variables. And these new variables often come from context. Verner's Law for instance brought accent as a new variable from context into language proper. Such new, formerly contextual variables then become part and parcel of the linguistic apparatus proper. As a result, linguistics expands. In turn, this expansion tends to raise new problems. They too at first seem indeterminate, but may in due course yield to rules which once again introduce new variables, often from what used to be regarded as context.

Contexts then, are not only important in describing settings of language varieties. They also give us new variables whose analysis can help us reduce the area of free variation. Thus the border between language and context is not absolute, closed, or fixed for all time. On the contrary, there has been, and presumably will be, traffic across it, mainly from context into linguistic description proper.

Though such perspectives seem clear enough, well-balanced views on homogeneity versus variation in language have been comparatively rare. More common have been the controversies. They have indeed coloured the linguistic dialectic ever since the ancient analogist-anomalist controversy, and were an essential ingredient in the debates about neogrammarian doctrine. Recently the same problems have been brought into new relief by discussions of models for polylectal grammars (Bailey 1974) and of the contrasts between positivism and hermeneutics in language study (Itkonen 1974).

It is thus easy enough to find programmatic statements dismissing contexts from linguistic theory or grammar. One comes from Katz and

Fodor 1964:

> Grammars seek to describe the structure of a sentence in isolation from its possible settings in linguistic discourse (written or verbal) or in nonlinguistic contexts (social or physical). The justification which permits the grammarian to study sentences in abstraction from the settings in which they have occurred or might occur is simply that the fluent speaker is able to construct and recognize syntactically well-formed sentences without recourse to information about settings, and this ability is what a grammar undertakes to reconstruct. Every facet of the fluent speaker's linguistic ability which a grammar reconstructs can be exercised independently of information about settings: this is true not only of the ability to produce and recognize sentences but also of the ability to determine syntactic relations between sentence types, to implicitly analyze the syntactic structure of sentences, and to detect grammatical ambiguities. Since, then, the knowledge a fluent speaker has of his language enables him to determine the grammatical structure of any sentence without reference to information about setting, grammar correspondingly forms an independent theory of this independent knowledge.
>
> We may generalize to arrive at a sufficient condition for determining when an ability of speakers is the proper subject matter of a synchronic theory in linguistics. The generalization is this: If speakers can employ an ability in apprehending the structure of any sentence in the infinite set of sentences of a language without reference to information about settings and without significant variation from speaker to speaker, then that ability is properly the subject matter of a synchronic theory in linguistics. (Katz and Fodor 1963, reprinted in Fodor and Katz 1964: 484; italics by the original writers.)

A related, though somewhat less categorical, statement to a similar effect has been voiced by John Lyons in his influential textbook:

> ... linguistic theory, at the present time at least, is not and cannot, be concerned with the production and understanding of utterances in their actual situations of use, ..., but with the structure of sentences considered in abstraction from the situations in which actual utterances occur. (Lyons 1968 : 98.)

This, then, is one pole of opinion: we can 'understand' sentences without situational and perhaps even discoursal context, and linguistic theory or grammar or synchronic linguistics should therefore study language as abstracted from context. One might note in passing that the generative lin-

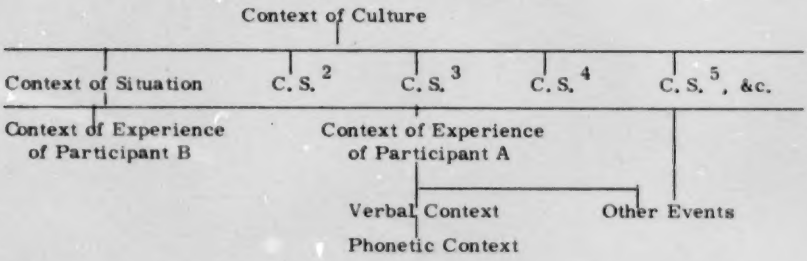
guists' current term 'context-sensitive rule' does not refer to socio-physical or discoursal settings, but merely to the environment of a unit within the formalized rule or rule system.

Advocates of the opposite view abound, not only among students of expression interested in performatives (Austin 1962, Ross 1970) and speech acts (Searle 1970, Ohmann 1971), but also in the camps of those mere dedicated to descriptions of surface variation than to neat, powerful theorizing. Many linguistic historians, dialectologists, sociolinguists and students of style are apt to accuse closed-system linguists of ignoring, ostrich-fashion, the basic fact that language is a social phenomenon. Language abstracted from its situational and textual envelopes, they suggest, is no more than an artefact. In normal use in vivo, outside the linguist's laboratory, all linguistic units have a context. And this does not apply only to units within the sentence. Even sentences are part of discourses and texts, and therefore have contexts which affect their form.

Vigorous statements to this effect have been made not only by literary scholars and rhetoricians but also by linguists, even during periods when structural analyses of closed systems were the height of fashion. Schools of linguists for instance in Denmark, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union have gone on insisting on due regard to the textual, contextual, and social aspects of language. Partly under the inspiration of Malinowski (see Langendoen 1968), J. R. Firth always emphasized that the only way to understand how language really works is

> to establish with certainty that the facts of speech we are studying can be observed or regarded in actual patterns of behaviour. We must take our facts from speech sequences, verbally complete in themselves and operating in contexts of situation which are typical, recurrent, and repeatedly observable. Such contexts of situation should themselves be placed in categories of some sort, sociological and linguistic, within the wider context of culture. (Firth 1957 : 35.)

Firth also drew an illustration of the process of progressive contextualization in the form of a tree (Firth 1957 : 36):



Thus Firth wanted to view linguistic facts in their actual use in their working conditions within a frame of pragmatic functionalism "without having to postulate a whole body of doctrine in an elaborate mental structure such as is derived from de Saussure" (ibid.). Kenneth Pike is another example of an influential linguist in the English-speaking world who has insisted on linking linguistic structures with larger patterns of behaviour, thus bringing contexts into the study of language (Pike 1967).

To assign linguists into two opposing camps merely on the grounds of what they say explicitly about contexts would be misleading, however. Even in the works of those who deny the relevance of context, considerations that others might call contextual tend to sneak in through the back door (Gipper 1971). Katz and Fodor have themselves suggested projection rules which make tacit use of context to disambiguate sentences in texts such as

An object rolled in. It was a colourful ball.

We danced all night. It was a colourful ball.

Projection rules, performatives whose superstructures may include contextual features, speech acts, illocutionary acts, the illocutionary force of an utterance (as distinct from grammatical mood), conversational implicature, presuppositions, hypersentences, truth values, factivity, sincerity values, points or networks of reference and co-reference, 'phoric' references (anaphora, cataphora, exophora), pronominalization, discourse referents, distinctions between given and new information, topic, comment, theme, rheme, and focus should all be counted among the devices grammarians use to draw on context in order to explain what happens within the sentence. Theories of meta-

phor and irony also appeal to context. In this light it is plausible to argue that in recent linguistics too, the sentence has come to appear more and more as a unit affected by, and to some extent determined by, forces outside itself, including contextual variables. Under different guises there has been an overall trend towards an increasing appeal to context. This is true in semiotics and semantics, in syntax, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, stylistics, applied linguistics and language teaching, and of course in text linguistics. Indeed text linguistics and text pragmatics were conceived to cater for the study of sentences in context (see recent survey in Schmidt 1973). All these developments should be seen as modern instances of the classic trend to tap context for new grammatical formatives.

The study of situational context is in fact one of the areas that compel the linguist to define his ideals of scientific accuracy. Such accuracy should not, as sometimes happens, be mechanically equated with the use of algorithmic formalizations, however successful such formalizations are in providing consistency and precision within their own postulates. Accuracy should rather be defined as a realistic appraisal of the possibilities and limitations, advantages or disadvantages of algorithmic formalization within each particular area of language study, leading to an adequately iconic relation between the model and the data. Students of style must often busy themselves with phenomena whose subtle complexities defy simple programming, except perhaps in terms so abstract and general that they defeat their purpose. This is not to deny that there are stylistic problems that can be meaningfully raised to levels of abstraction which make powerful formalization possible. But in abstraction, concrete details can be lost. The cost of formalization may become heavy. The more general and powerful a categorical statement becomes so as to cover increasingly large amounts of phenomena, the fewer tend to be the details that are exhaustively catered for by that statement. The choice of delicacy levels, to speak with Halliday, is thus crucial.

In principle, the interests of formalization should not be allowed to lead the student of style to such levels of abstraction that stylistically relevant information is hidden or lost. Student of individual literary works for instance are ill served by formal literary or linguistic theories where significant fea-

tures of these individual works disappear through the meshes of the formal net. The same applies to classifications of contexts. For some purposes, a rough categorization may be in order. For other purposes, contextual classifications must be so full of delicate detail that no aprioristic formal system will suffice for their description. Even in such instances, a linguist will still have use for a general theory or metatheory -- in the sense of 'a model for the building of models' -- on which he can draw when worrying about his delicate details.

2

After these preliminaries, a definition of context may already seem overdue.

To begin with, we may define context very comprehensively as the aggregate of linguistic, situational, social and cultural variables that surround linguistic units such as texts, discourses, utterances, words, morphemes, phonemes, sounds, and distinctive features. We may then proceed to distinguish between different subtypes of context. A textual context may be defined as the set of suitably defined linguistic units that co-occur with a given linguistic unit within a given text. Thus sentences of a text co-occur with other sentences, words with other words, clauses with other clauses, and so on. There is no reason to restrict the concept of a textual context to such homogeneous envelopes where the unit and its co-occurring units are described at the same level, as in the above examples. Contexts may also cut across levels. We may study the sentence context or clause context of a word or a morpheme, the textual context of a pronoun, and so forth.

In addition to the textual context, linguistic units occur in a situational context explicable in terms of the communication act: the people who communicate, their relations to each other, the medium and channel of communication, and the time, place, purpose, and circumstances of communication. The situational context overlaps with a social context involving those situational features and their backgrounds that are amenable to description in terms of social forces, social groups and their interactions. The situ-

ational and social contexts may also be viewed against the background of a cultural context, which gives traditional meanings to social and situational patterns. Another kind of context is the pragmatic or truth context. In communication, features in a text are matched against the real-world circumstances surrounding the act of communication, and against truth values or assumotions known or unknown to the communicants (Lewis 1970, Montague 1970, Dahl 1072). According to one model, we react to texts by setting up a possible world for each text, and then match the world of the text with the world around us (in science fiction, for instance, the world of the text is different from our own, but is made consistent and credible for the moment through a systematic pseudoscientific explanation). As I shall deal little with this kind of context in the present paper, it must suffice to note that pragmatic contexts may affect sentence structure for instance in terms of modalities or of factivity (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970). It may also have subtler influences on the substance and form of an utterance in determining sincerity values for instance in irony, debate and polite intercourse. Finally, those who identify style with affective language may need a psychological context to explain the choice of affective elements.

The reason why contextual variables are relevant to the student of style have by now become commonplace. In brief, many students of style agree that style is that variation of language which correlates with certain types of contextual features.

Such an approach raises a host of problems, however. All varieties of language are used in contexts, and the study of context is therefore a necessary adjunct to all studies of linguistic variation. Historical forms of a language are definable in terms of context of time and place. Dialects correlate with place, sociolects with socially determinable characteristics of their speakers, registers -- in one of the manifold senses of this ambiguous term -- with the social role of an individual in a given situation, idiolects with an individual user of the language. All such variants of language may also overlap with each other and with the kind of variation usually labelled as 'style'. The problem is further complicated by the fact that the term 'style' has been given

many different meanings by different investigators (Sayce 1962, Enkvist 1964, DeVito 1967). In a wider frame than that of the present paper, even the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of the cultural relativity of languages might become relevant as a constraint on the range of stylistic variation.

If style is defined broadly as that linguistic variation which correlates with a defined context, many kinds of language variants which can be labelled as historical forms, dialects, sociolects, registers and idiolects may in fact also come under the umbrella of style. In diglossia -- the kind of code-switching where different languages are used in different situations within the same community -- even languages may take on the fuctions of styles. Such overlaps may seem repugnant to those who like neat categorizations. But they also agree nicely with experience and current usage. For instance, in religious and legal texts, older forms of the language often co-exist with younger ones in the guise of styles: what people call 'Biblical style' is at the same time an older form of the language. Archaisms actually contribute to the stylistic flavour of a wide range of text types. In many societies, a standard language is used in formal situations and a regional dialect in informal ones. If so, the regional dialect works as a style. Similar observations can be made of sociolects, registers and idiolects. One way of resolving such problems of overlap is to define stylistics as different from other types of study of linguistic varieties because of its approach and conceptual frame rather than by the substance of its object of investigation. In a stylistic perspective, styles and stylistically marked features would then include those historical forms, dialectal forms, sociolects, registers and idiolects or features brought from them, that correlate or contrast with those contexts which the investigator has decided to regard as stylistically relevant.

As a corollary, there are situations in which it is idle to argue whether a given linguistic variant is, in absolute terms, a style or something else. The answer will depend on one's approach and definition of 'style'. All the same we shall need a clear overall view, a theory, of linguistic variation in toto, and a theory-based model of the particular kinds of variation we find in a given speech community. This should be supplemented with clear definitions and descriptions

of the premises underlying each investigation, so that the reader knows precisely what the investigator is doing and not doing. Only thus can we avoid unnecessary arguments arising for instance from a situation where one linguist's style is the same as another linguist's sociolect.

In this light, arguments of the exact place of stylistics in the hierarchy of linguistic and literary disciplines seem equally barren. For some purposes it is expedient to view stylistics as an independent discipline free to tap the wells of historical linguistics, synchronic linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, literary theory, literary history and criticism, and other helpful disciplines for its concepts and materials, including contributions to context description and classification. For other purposes it may seem more natural to regard stylistics as a branch of linguistics (or even of some subarea of linguistics such as syntax or lexis), of sociolinguistics or historical linguistics or some other field. Gaps are worse than overlaps. It is more important that problems are taken care of than that they are taken care of under one label rather than another. If the premises and methods of a purportedly stylistic investigation are explicit enough, the result may be useful to, and sometimes even translatable into the terms of, people other than self-confessed students of style.

3

For the sake of the argument, let us now assume that we know what we mean by 'style' and have adopted one or another of the definitions that have been discussed by style theorists. Let us further assume that we have at our disposal a text and an exhaustive inventory of the contextual, including situational, features that surround this text in an act of communication. Let us assume that we know all about the person who conceived and encoded the text, all about the person who received and decoded it, and everything about the circumstances that envelop the act of communication, including the language, subcode, channel, purpose, time and place. Our next task is clearly to select those features from this enormously long list that are relevant to

that aspect of the text which we have defined as its style. For instance, when two persons converse, it may make no difference to what we call their linguistic style whether one wears a red tie and the other brown shoes. It may make no difference whether the conversation takes place on a bus or in a tube-train, in an oval office or a square one, in rain or in sunshine. But it may make a great deal of difference that the conversation takes place between husband and wife, not between two company directors who meet for the first time. And it may make a great deal of difference that the conversation is about fishing rather than politics. The student of context must therefore learn to distinguish between two classes of contextual features: those that are stylistically significant by correlating with such features of language as are defined as stylistic, and those that lack such correlation and are therefore stylistically non-significant.

In trying to discover whether a given feature is stylistically significant or non-significant, one may proceed in two directions. Either one takes a given linguistic form and makes an inventory of the range of contexts in which it occurs. Or one takes a certain situation or range of situation and makes an inventory of the linguistic forms that occur in it. In the latter approach, these forms must then be compared with those that occur in other, comparable or contrasting, situations, if one is to find out what forms are characteristic of each situation or range of situations. In practice, these two approaches can supplement each other. The former method is a natural starting-point if one is interested in the contextual spread of well-defined, neatly contrasting linguistic units such as the familiar versus the formal pronouns of address (Brown and Gilman 1960). The latter avenue may seem more rewarding to those who wish to study, say, a wide range of major style categories in an entire language.

After the stylistically relevant features of the context have been isolated, they must be described and defined. In different cultures, different contextual features may have stylistic significance. Therefore no rigid, precise and delicate lists a priori of stylistically relevant contextual universals are possible. General statements demand a relatively high level of abstraction.

Indeed the stylistic relevance of contextual features may vary even between social subgroups whithin the same community, not to speak of major culture-bound patterns such as Japanese keigo or the 'linguistic etiquette' in Javanese (Geertz 1968), whose exact contextual ties are hard to render into, say, terms of English culture and society. Hence the usual procedure of context theorists has been to offer lists of potentially significant contextual categories or parameters, from among which each investigator is invited to select those that prove relevant to his particular task.

The very character of the relation between a text and its context can vary. Some contexts are characterized by a high degree of linguistic predictability culminating in 'frozen' language (Joos 1962): ceremonial formulae, military commands, fixed prayers, obligatory phraseology in legal contracts, performatives whose efficacy is tied to phrasing. At some levels of language, for instance in meter, certain literary forms exact a firm obedience to patterns. Thus the traditional sonnet demands a certain rhyme-scheme (or, more precisely, the choice of one from a small set of rhyme-schemes) as well as certain restrictions on line length and rythm. Other contexts are, on the contrary, characterized by a great range of variation. In some kinds of modern poetry, for instance, linguistic innovations have been emphasized even at the expense of normal syntax. Thus the range of variation may itself become a stylistically significant characteristic of a context, and vice versa. Appropriateness may therefore vary all the way from an obligatory, frozen phraseology through firm patterning all the way to infinite variation, even overstepping the confines of normal syntax.

4

For reasons rehearsed above, the relations between stylistics and sociolinguistics have become increasingly close. Both study language in context. Many sociolinguists study variations of language that are correlated with textual and situational features not open to description in purely sociological

terms, and many students of style have gone far beyond the language of literary masterpieces and literary genres. Whether an investigation claims to be stylistic or sociolinguistic is sometimes largely a matter of labels and academic policy. It is therefore natural that students of style and of sociclinguistics can make use of the same conceptual apparatus in context description and analysis, notably when working with situational contexts.

There is ample evidence for this in the recent spate of readings in sociolinguistics (e.g. Hymes 1964, Fishman 1970, Giglioli 1972, Pride and Holmes 1972), and in standard textbooks such as Fishman's Sociology and Language (Fishman 1972). As those who approach stylistics from the literary end are not always conversant with sociolinguistic contributions, it may be expedient to refer briefly to Fishman's presentation as an example of that wide sociolinguistic approach sometimes called interactional.

Fishman defines the smallest sociolinguistic unit as the speech act which is usually part of a larger speech event such as a conversation, prayer or lecture. The sociolinguist's first task is to set up connections between speech acts, speech events, and types of language. This leads him to distinctions between functionally different speech acts and speech events. The result must be verified by consulting informants from within the relevant speech community.

One group of contextual variables consists of those role relationships that are recognized in the particular speech community: husband-wife, father-son, clergyman-layman, employer-employee, friend-friend, and so forth. Some role relationships are more invariant than others. The king-subject relationship, for instance, is likely to be more resistant to shift and change than, say, the relation shopkeeper-customer, because a shopkeeper may meet his customers in other roles such as relative-relative or friend-friend, and as a member of the same religious or party group.

The context in time and place is another variable affecting the social situation. In each situation, behaviour may be congruent or incongruent. Lovers, says Fishman, may meet at a time and place proper for love-making, but may behave incongruently, for instance by quarrelling or by discussing

what happened in the office. Such incongruent behaviour may lead to a reinterpretation of the role relationship: quarrelling lovers may relapse into, say, an employer-employee relationship. The assessment of situations and situational switching are governed by those normative views that prevail within the community. Situations need not be discontinuous: some situational variables are not always discrete. Fishman further notes the possibility of metaphorical switching, an intentional and conscious change of language without a corresponding change in the social situation. If, for instance, a speaker switches into Cockney in a speech situation normally calling for Standard English, he may do so for special effect. Such metaphorical switches bring with them risks, however. "Metaphorical switching," Fishman adds, "is a luxury that can be afforded only by those that comfortably share not only the same set of situational norms but also the same view as to their inviolability" (Fishman 1972:43). Those who indulge in metaphorical switching may be misunderstood by an audience which does not share their background.

Fishman goes on to distinguish between micro-level and macro-level studies of linguistic variation. Domain is a construct definable with the aid of aggregates of regularities that have been found in socially recognized functions, speech acts and speech events. Domains are first set up hypothetically by the investigator, who must then validate them in terms of the intuitions of relevant members of the relevant speech community. "There are," says Fishman, "classes of events recognized by each speech network or community in which several seemingly different situations are classed as being of the same kind" (Fishman 1972:51) and thus as belonging to the same domain. It is another empirical task for the investigator to find out where run the boundaries between such classes of situations. This is one of the most fundamental questions in all descriptive sociolinguistics. Observation of participants, interviews, surveys, experiments and other weapons from the arsenal of the social sciences should be brought to bear on such problems.

In sum, Fishman quotes a heuristic list of components of speech events (or, in terms of the present paper, contextual variables) from Hymes 1967. The acrostic list goes as follows:

(S) Setting or scene: time and place; also, psychological setting and cultural definition of the type of scene

(P) Participants or personnel: e.g., addressor-addressee-audience

(E) Ends: ends in view (goals, purposes) and ends as outcome

(A) Art characteristics: the form and the content of what is said

(K) Key: the tone, manner or spirit in which an act is done

(I) Instrumentalities: channel (the choice of oral, written, telegraphic, or other medium) and code (Spanish, English, etc.) or subcode (dialect, sociolect)

(N) Norms of interaction and interpretation: specific behaviours and properties that may accompany acts of speech, as well as shared rules of understanding what occurs in speech acts

(G) Genres: categories or types of speech acts and speech events: e.g., conversation, curse, prayer, lecture, etc.

Some of these variables are accessible to exact observation and objectivistic description from the outside. Others, such as ends and perhaps key, invoke information that must reckon with the participants' subjective opinions.

As such lists of contextual variables tend to form structures of their own, they should be quoted entire. It might be misleading to extricate single variables from them and to compare them with similarly extricated single variables from other structures, even though the terms and labels might happen to be the same.

Several linguists too have tried to offer lists of potentially significant categories of contextual features. J.R. Firth's list has already been cited above. The following comes from Enkvist 1964:

textual context
  linguistic frame
    phonetic context (voice quality, speech rate, &c.)
    phonemic context
    morphemic context (he sings / he singeth)

syntactic context (including sentence length and complexity)
lexical context
punctuation, capitalization
compositional frame
beginning, middle or end of utterance, paragraph, poem, play, &c.
relationship of text to surrounding textual portions
metre, literary form, typographical arrangement
extratextual context
period
type of speech, literary genre
speaker / writer
listener / reader
relationship between speaker/writer and listener/reader in terms of sex, age, familiarity, education, social class and status, common stock of experience, &c.
context of situation and environment
gesture, physical action
dialect and language

Such lists, then, are heuristic aids in that they remind the investigator of at least some of the contextual variables he ought to think of when correlating context and language. Different linguists have presented such lists with different degrees of hierarchic ordering. One attempt to group features into a short-list of relevant contextual dimensions comes from Spencer and Gregory 1964 in correlation with the linguistic theory of M.A.K. Halliday. They distinguish first the historical and dialectal setting into which each text must be placed. Then each text has a field, a mode and a tenor. Field relates a text to its subject matter: a love-letter and a scientific article differ in field. Mode relates the discourse to its channel and medium: spoken and written texts differ in mode. It is, however, possible to use spoken modes in writing, for instance in written representations of dialogue in a play. Tenor is the term for the relations

between the communication partners, mainly in degrees of formality. All these categories may interact. Certain tenors thus usually go together with certain fields: a paper on nuclear physics is likely to be formal, and so on. It should be noted that the three concepts field, mode and tenor were not created ad hoc to cater merely for stylistic context. They also appear elsewhere in Halliday's linguistics.

Yet another attempt at a classification of situational context has been made by Crystal and Davy (1969). They speak about dimensions of situational constraint, emphasizing that though some central constraints are easy to spot, so far their more exhaustive classification rema ns highly hypothetical. In their view, certain linguistic features belong to a common core of language. They are stylistically neutral, as every utterance shares them in some degree with all other utterances in the speech community regardless of the situational context. Other features are situationally restricted. These restrictions can be grouped into a set of dimensions as follows:

A. Individuality
   Dialect
   Time
B. Discourse
   (a) simple / complex medium (speech, writing)
   (b) simple / complex participation (monologue, dialogue)
C. Province
   Status
   Modality
   Singularity

By individuality, Crystal and Davy mean the relatively permanent features of the speech or writing habits of an individual in un-self-conscious utterance. Such features can identify one person's language as different from that of other users of the same language or the same variety of the language. Dialect correlates with a person's geographical origin or social position, and thus includes both regional and class dialect. Time places the text in its chronological frame. Of the discoursal factors, medium here refers to the channel (speech, writing, or a mix-

ture of media as in scripted speech), and participation to the relation between the communication partners in terms of one-way or two-way communication. Province relates an utterance to variables inherent in occupational or professional activity which would be the same irrespective of who the participants are. Status has to do with variations in the social standing of the participants. Modality is defined as

> those linguistic features correlatable with the specific purpose of an utterance which has led the user to adopt one feature or set of features rather than another, and ultimately to produce an overall, conventionalised spoken or written format for his language, which may be given a descriptive label ... For example, there would be linguistic differences in modality if, within the province of conversation, in its written form (what might be called 'correspondence', for the sake of convenience), one chose to communicate a message in the shape of a letter, a postcard, a note, a telegram, or a memo; or, within the province of scientific English, if one chose to write up a topic in the form of a lecture, report, essay, monograph, or textbook. (Crystal and Davy 1964: 74-75.)

Finally, singularity comprises those personal, occasional idiosyncrasies which owe to the preferences of the individual user but do not relate to anything systematic in the community as a whole. Features of singularity are thus short and temporary, not continuous and permanent like the features of individuality.

Crystal and Davy add that language varieties are a complex business not wholly explicable in terms of these variables alone. Relations between the variables are also of interest. For instance certain combinations of medium, participation and province tend to go together with certain features of status, and so forth. They summarize their discussion by posing a set of subquestions for the general diagnostic query, 'Apart from the message being communicated, what other kind of information does the utterance give us?' These subquestions are:

> Does it tell us which specific person used it? (Individuality.)
> Does it tell us where in the country he is from? (Regional dialect.)
> Does it tell us which social class he belongs to? (Class dialect.)
> Does it tell us during which period of English he spoke or wrote it,

or how old he was? (Time.)

Does it tell us whether he was speaking or writing? (Discourse medium.)

Does it tell us whether he was speaking or writing as an end in itself, or as a means to a further end? (Simple v complex discourse medium.)

Does it tell us whether there was only one participant in the utterance, or whether there was more than one? (Discourse participation.)

Does it tell us whether the monologue and dialogue are independent, or are to be considered as part of a wider type of discourse? (Simple v Complex discourse participation.)

Does it tell us which specific occupational activity the user is engaged in? (Province.)

Does it tell us about the social relationship existing between the user and his interlocutors? (Status.)

Does it tell us about the purpose he had in mind when conveying the message? (Modality.)

Does it tell us that the user was being deliberately idiosyncratic? (Singularity.)

Does it tell us none of these things? (Common-core.)

After answering these questions, the student of style

> has two main tasks to carry out: to specify the number of (formally and functionally) distinct categories within each dimension, and plot the extent to which categories from different dimensions may co-occur. A variety will then be seen as a unique configuration of linguistic features, each feature being referable to one or more of the above dimensions of description; the variety displays a stable formal-functional correspondence, which is the basis of the intuitive impression of coherence and predictability that may then be labelled ... Within each dimension, one may distinguish a number (to be defined) of situational categories such as 'formal', 'informal', 'religious', 'legal'. Different dimensions will have different numbers of categories. A switch in the categories at any one dimension (eg legal English becoming religious English, formal English becoming informal English) thus by definition produces a different variety. Some categories are naturally going to be closer

together (share more linguistic correlates) than others, such as 'informal' and 'colloquial'; and therefore some varieties will be much closer together than others. (Crystal and Davy 1969: 64-83.)

Yet another example with a different slant. In her so far unprinted Habilitationsschrift for the University of Leipzig (1969), Rosemarie Gläser contributed a rough classification of situational variables. She pleads for a Situationsforschung or 'Situationik' providing a typology for those situational features that influence the coding and decoding of a text. Her situational variables pay explicit attention to institutionalized norms of linguistic behaviour and to cultural heritage; they will be cited in the present writer's abbreviated translation:

(a) the psychological motivation of an utterance (emotional factors, attitudes to conversation partner)

(b) personality factors (age, sex, education, social background)

(c) norms of behaviour (collectively accepted rules of behaviour in institutionalized contexts such as administration, education, the military, law, the press, business, industry, advertising, traffic, the police, &c.)

(d) cultural background (the collective stock of information within the speech community, which can be activated by reference: for instance, national literature, history, the Bible, classical mythology)

(e) the special pragmatic motivation of the utterance (not in terms of individual psychological motives but in terms of social motive categories such as the forming of opinions, the increase of consumption, teaching people traffic rules, &c.)

Gläser emphasizes that these categories may influence the choice of linguistic features at all levels of language. She cites Felix Trojan (Trojan 1952) to connect intonation patterns with subjective situational features such as surprise, joy, disappointment or disgust. Thus there may be links between psychological motivation, which is a contextual feature, and the phonetic surface of an utterance. This in fact brings up the question of the relation between context and paralinguistic features, which will be briefly touched upon below.

It would be tedious to cite further examples of catalogues of potentially significant contextual features. Most of those who present them stress

that it is up to each investigator to pick from them, and to elaborate, those dimensions that he needs. Indeed there are tasks for which relatively rough and simple classifications are both necessary and sufficient. Thus in his highly influential study of the correlation between some features of sociolect and situational context in New York English, William Labov managed with a single stylistic dimension consisting of five categories or levels: casual speech, careful speech, reading, word lists, and minimal pairs. For his purposes, Labov found it possible to range his 'styles' on one single scale depending on how much attention the speaker paid to his speech. His five levels can thus be regarded as values on a scale of self-consciousness or formality (Labov 1970). Another important approach selecting contextual features for a specific purpose is that of Basil Bernstein and his collaborators (Bernstein 1971-73). Here context is viewed as a variable affecting what Bernstein calls 'codes'. These are ranged on a scale between the 'elaborated code' and the 'restricted code', which are claimed to correlate with two major social strata. Such approaches which try to isolate a small set of contextual features which correlate with a selection of linguistic features could be termed correlational. They differ from the interactional approach to context, which seeks to isolate culturally significant categories of speech events and communication situations (Oksaar 1974) and which was illustrated above through Fishman and Hymes.

The study of the interdependence of contextual features presents problems of its own. One approach is through factorial analysis or numerical taxonomy, which may reveal links between individual features and suggest their grouping into vectors and major dimensions. A methodologically suggestive study along these lines is that by Carroll (1960), though some of the emerging vectors had to be given broad labels such as 'general stylistic evaluation' which tell us little about the ultimate causes of the judgements of Carroll's informants. Another problem calling for decisions is the arrangement of categories, vectors or dimensions. The investigator must make up his mind whether he should operate with scales such as the seven-point scale used by Osgood and his collaborators in semantic and stylistic studies (Osgood

et al. 1957), or prefer systems of distinctive features, even reducing context into a system of binary distinctions (Vinogradov and Kostomarov 1967). Such decisions will affect the systematic description and hierarchization of contexts. The view of a contextual hierarchy as a tree becomes awkward and cumbersome if there is a great deal of overlap and if the same feature must reappear over and over again in different parts of the tree. In such instances one may be tempted to set up a matrix of contextual features in terms of binary values or scale values. Those combinations which always occur together contain redundancies which may be simplified by eliminating the unnecessary features. Such procedures are interesting because they show how contextual features depend on one another. They may also introduce hierarchic principles into matrices of contextual features.

In the light of recent semantics it might be worth noting that presuppositions are another way in which certain types of contextual features can be expressed. This is so both when presuppositions refer to semantic truth values, and when they are defined with reference to a specific speech act and to what a speaker assumes that his conversation partner knows. When we try to formulate the presuppositions of a sentence, we in fact state some of the contextual conditions under which that sentence could be appropriately used. A presupposition is thus a shorthand formula summarizing certain relevant features of context. Note that the context expressed through a presupposition can contain situational as well as textual features. A sentence such as

Susan also DRINKS beer occasionally.

presupposes that Susan does something else with beer than drink it. The sentence would be appropriate both in a text explicitly stating "Susan always washes her hair with beer.", and in a situation where Susan is seen washing her hair with beer and one of those present offers the above sentence as a piece of comment. So far, those working with presuppositions have emphasized their semantic rather than stylistic content (see recent survey by Kempson, 1973). But students of context might ponder to what extent those presuppositions that are based on speech acts become open-ended towards stylistic context and text pragmatics. If presuppositions express conditions

of appropriateness they may also acquire a stylistic dimension. In some societies, mutual use of the familiar pronoun between adult strangers would thus presuppose a context of social solidarity, whereas non-reciprocal use of the familiar pronoun would presuppose a difference in status between the speakers. In fact such choices affect the context by revealing in what light a speaker has chosen to regard it. Yet another problem is how much of the stylistically relevant context we can, or should, try to express in terms of the performative super-structures of generative grammarians (Ross 1970). But here we get involved with the efficacy of different grammar models in the description of stylistic variation, which is too large a subject to be dissected here. It must suffice to note that a student of style is best served by a grammar model which allows variable rules that are sensitive both to textual and situational features of context -- at present, a pious wish indeed.

5

The problem of hierarchization of styles through a ranking of contextual features has been most resolutely tackled by some of the adherents of so-called functional stylistics.

In this collocation, the attribute 'functional' has acquired a specific, technical sense. A functional style is not just any style that happens to do its job efficiently and thus to function well. Nor is the term used to refer to the classic functions of language of Karl Bühler or Roman Jakobson. Nor does 'functional' here refer to the contrast between 'functional' and 'organic' as in medicine, where a functional condition depends on the way in which organs work, and an organic condition on the build of the organ itself. On the contrary functional style comprises both the choice of linguistic units as well as the way in which they are put to work.

Functional stylistics can rather be seen as an approach which marries contextual, social and extralinguistic considerations to the analysis of linguistic and literary form. When the pendulum swung back from the extremes of Russian formalism to a synthesis of formal and contextual con-

siderations, a host of Czech scholars with Mathesius and Mukařovsky in the van brought in contexts under the term of functions into the study of language and literature (introduction and bibliography in Fried 1972). In the Soviet Union, V. V. Vinogradov was one of the key persons fostering a new consensus of functional stylistics, which has been developed by a wealth of scholars: Olga Akhmanova, R. A. Budagov, I. R. Galperin, M. Kožina, Elise Riesel and many others. G. V. Kolšanskij is one of the Soviet linguists with a particular interest in context and paralinguistics (Kolšanskij 1959).

In essence, adherents of functional stylistics start out from certain specific social functions of language, at least of the 'literary language' (a term often translatable as 'standard language' rather than as 'the language of belles-lettres'). Axiomatically, it is the purpose of language to serve socially definable goals, functions. These functions need specific forms of language, functional styles. A functional style thus becomes a complex set of linguistic patterns which co-occurs with a certain function, the function being definable as a socially, and thus contextually, determinable range of situations. Wolfgang Fleischer has summarized this as follows:

> Wir begreifen die Sprache mit L. Scerba als 'eine menschliche Tätigkeit ... die sich in jedem Fall auf ein bestimmtes Ziel richtet'. Das System ist nicht Selbstzweck. 'Die Sprache funktioniert nicht, weil sie ein System ist, sondern sie ist umgekehrt ein System, damit sie ihre Funktion erfüllen kann.' Diese Funktion ist aussersprachlichen, gesellschaftlichen Charakters: die Sprache ermöglicht die menschliche Produktionstätigkeit. Sie dient der Erkenntnis und der Kommunikation, dabei auch der Erziehung und Ausbildung, der Verhaltenssteuerung und Bewusstseinsentwicklung. Sie ist Mittel der Gefühlsäusserung und bringt ästhetische Wirkungen hervor. In diesem = auf die gesellschaftlichen Aufgaben der Sprache und der Sprachnutzung gerichteten - Sinne soll der Terminus funktional im folgenden verstanden werden ... (Fleischer 1970:23.)

An extreme non-functionalist would have to conduct an empirical search from scratch to find those contextual features that prove to correlate with the formal linguistic features available in a text. An extreme functionalist would assume that he can define important contextual categories directly by a social theory and a concomitant social model of the speech community in question.

Protagonists of such views are apt to discuss styles in terms of a strictly limited set of major social functions. Indeed classic functional taxonomies of styles into, say, scientific, administrative, colloquial, and aesthetic, on grounds of the corresponding functions of language in society, are neat and pedagogically useful. But nevertheless the question arises as to the extent to which such simple categorizations actually do justice to the infinite variety of styles and substyles within each major category, and to the infinite possibilities of stylistic overlaps, blends and switches of styles. One reply to such objections is to build in further variation into the theory. Each functional style can be said to have not only a characteristic core definable in terms of certain invariant features, but also a variable margin. Another reply is to stress the virtues of the approach as such, and to regard the actual delimitation and listing of functional styles as less important:

> Den Streit um die Zahl und Benennung der funktionalen Stiltypen halte ich aber für weniger wichtig als die Einsicht - und die damit verbundenen Konsequenzen und Problemerörterungen -, dass überhaupt eine solche funktionalstilistische Differenzierung existiert und man sprachliche Mittel nicht pauschal bewerten kann ... (Fleischer 1970:24.)

A third justification cites the need for simplifications in teaching. And a fourth would be to validate given classification of styles under functional heading by formal analysis. Should for instance a factorial analysis of the clustering of linguistic features within a large, stylistically heterogeneous corpus reveal vectors that correspond precisely to functional styles, these styles would assume a linguistic and not only a social entity. Such an analysis has been attempted e. g. by A. Ja. Šajkevič in a computer study of a set of English seventeenth-century texts (Šajkevič 1968).

It is here impracticable to present a number of different functional classifications of styles as they appear in works by different adherents to the functional view. The following example is borrowed from I. R. Galperin's English Stylistics, expressly written for Soviet students of English at college level:

(1) The belles-lettres style
(a) poetry proper, (b) emotive prose, (c) drama

(2) The publicistic style
(a) speeches (oratory), (b) essays, (c) articles in journals and newspapers

(3) The newspaper style
(a) newspaper headlines, (b) brief news items and communiqués, (c) advertisements

(4) The scientific prose style
(a) humanities, (b) exact sciences

(5) The style of official documents
(a) commercial documents, (b) diplomatic documents, (c) legal documents, (d) military documents

(Galperin 1971: 18-19.)

Such a list follows the definition of a style as "a system of interrelated language means which serves a definite aim in communication", to quote Galperin's formulation of the functionalists' basic principle (Galperin 1971: 18).

Whether a functionalist presents a smaller or a larger number of functional styles he too is tempted to pose the fundamental question as to what factors actually determine his stylistic categories. And if he does so, he will be led to basic features of context. His list of such features need then look no different from that of a non-functionalist student of linguistics contexts. To cite a survey article on Prague-school functional stylistics by Josef Dubský:

> The fundamental stylistic factor in functional stylistics is the concrete purpose of the utterance and this is determined by the conditions in which the act of speech takes place in a concrete area of human activity. We can distinguish four main aspects: the content of the discourse, the situation, the attitude of the speaker to reality, and his relation to the listener.
>
> The different objective styles of standard language are determined by objective factors. The main objective factors can be summarized in three principal groups:
>
> 1. The factors connected with meaning:
>
> (a) the function of communication, which can be communicative (colloquial style), practically professional (style of the official, technical and professional language), theoretically professional (the scientific language, function of

mass communications (journalistic style), aesthetically communicative (works of art);
(b) the purpose of the act of speech, which can be an objective statement (the interpretative style) or an appeal (in the journalistic style);
(c) the speaker's attitude to the theme: it can be serious (official style), humorous (the comical nature of the utterance), depreciating (ironical or invective nature of the utterance);
(d) the mode of theme: dynamic (narration) or static (description);
(e) the degree of spontaneity (from the style of entirely spontaneous and that of prepared utterances).

2. The elements connected with the situation of the utterance:
(a) private or official setting (the style of the private or official utterances);
(b) bilateral (the style of dialogues) or unilateral speech (the style of monologues);
(c) the contact between the author and the addressee (in the colloquial utterance), whether the addressee is present (style of situational utterances) or absent (broadcasting style).

3. The language substance used: phonic (the style of spoken utterances) or graphic (the style of written or printed utterances).

(Dubský 1972: 116-117.)

What, then is the translatability of lists of functional styles into terms of contextual features? Functional styles can be regarded as those styles that correlate with certain fixed, recurrent matrices of contextual features which occur often enough to be seen as significant within their own social setting. In this view, there is no conflict or contradiction between the use of lists or matrices of contextual features, and the principles of functional stylistics. It is also true that different kinds of communities make use of different sets of functional styles: just as different communities use different sets of contextual features, so they also have different functional styles. When one compares functional theories with, say, the sociolinguistic principles of Fishman and Hymes cited above, functional stylistics does seem to involve a risk, however. And that risk lies less in the theory itself than in

its hardening into a rigid and orthodox doctrine. Things go wrong if an aprioristic social theory leads to functional categories into which the facts of language can be fitted only by procrustean violence.

In M. A. K. Halliday's grammar, to give yet another example of a different type of 'function' relevant to context, three main functions affecting the structure of language are: the experiential or ideational function expressing our own experience of the real world or our consciousness; the interpersonal function expressing attitudes, roles, wishes and other social and personal ideas; and the textual function, which serves to create coherent discourse. But Halliday further describes a number of other, more properly contextual, intentional functions, which he illustrates with a child's needs when learning to speak. There is the informative use, which is more typical of adult language; the instrumental use ("I want"), the regulatory use ("do as I say"), the interactional use ("me and you"), the personal use ("here I come"), the heuristic use ("tell me why"), the imaginative use ("let's pretend"), the representational use ("I have something to tell"), and the ritual use ("see how cultured I am"). Such functions and language uses are likely to overlap in actual texts, but usually with different weights: some kinds of discourse are, for instance, dominated by ritual, whereas other kinds are weighted in favour of, say, informative or interpersonal functions. Granted, such functions are based on communicative intentions rather than on contexts. But as certain intentions are likely to be dominant in certain contexts and rare in others (for instance, ritual uses are common in religious services, instrumental uses when people buy things in shops, and so forth), these functions are by no means irrelevant to students of context. To what extent function can predict context and vice versa is an empirical question. In societies and situations where margins of linguistic tolerance and appropriateness are narrow, the fit is likely to be closer than in societies and situations where a wide variety of language is regarded as appropriate. (See Halliday 1969: 26-37.)

6

A very different and much more restricted, intratextual rather than social, situational or functional definition of context underlies the stylistic theory of Michael Riffaterre. Here the focus is on literary styles, which largely explains the emphasis on textual rather than on situational context. To avoid the difficulties inherent in style definitions as deviance from a norm external to the text itself, Riffaterre replaces the idea of a norm by appealing to intratextual context. What constitutes style is, he says, rather the appearance of stylistically marked units which contrast with the non-marked units in their environment. In developing his argument, Riffaterre distinguishes between two kinds of context: a microcontext comprising a single stylistically marked item or structure and its contrasting environment, and a macrocontext comprising the total sequence of units or structures in the text, a sequence whose unity impresses itself upon the reader:

> La différence entre le macrocontexte et le microcontexte, c'est que le premier présente une séquence de variants tous réalisés dans le text, et dont l'isomorphisme s'impose irrésistiblement au lecteur. Tandis que dans le second cas l'isomorphisme est percu par une seule comparaison, entre deux variants seulement. (Riffaterre 1971: 73)

There are, Riffaterre adds, two kinds of microcontext. One is based on the reader's general knowledge of semantic plausibilities. Thus Corneille's collocation obscure clarté makes the reader react to an apparent contradiction, even without access to wider spans of the text. The other occurs when the stylistically marked item stands out only within its own textual envelope, as in Voltaire's Candide:

> il était décidé par l'université de Coimbre que le spectacle de quelques personnes brulées à petit feu, en grande cérémonie, est un secret infaillible pour empecher la terre de trembler.

As such, both à petit feu and en grande cérémonie are semantically normal, compatible collocations. Their stylistic effect does not arise from seman-

tic improbabilities like that of obscure clarté, but from the juxtaposition of linguistic units within the text itself.

Microcontext, then, enables us to study the stylistic markedness of individual linguistic units or structures. Macrocontext is

> la partie du message littéraire qui précède le procédé stylistique et qui lui est extérieure (ce sens de contexte est le plus proche l'acception courante). (Riffaterre 1971: 80).

Of macrocontexts there are two types. One follows the pattern contexte --> procédé stylistique --> contexte. Here the text returns to the same contextual pattern that prevailed before the appearance of the contrastive, and therefore stylistically marked, item. The other has the pattern contexte --> procédé stylistique point de départ d'un nouveau contexte --> procédé stylistique. This latter scheme appears in texts which contain a whole series of stylistically marked items of the same kind: archaisms, for instance. The ensuing saturation makes these items lose their contrastive power and turns them into a new context, which in turn serves as the background for new contrasts. Thus the first type of macrocontext is apparently a characteristic of more homogeneous texts, the second of texts with shifts of style. To the crucial question as to how one is to spot contrasts, polarities and stylistic markedness, Riffaterre answers by appealing to informant responses obtained from an archilecteur (in an earlier paper, the term was 'average reader', AR). The archi-reader's responses can be elicited directly, or reconstructed from a set of statements by, for instance, literary critics. They are not based on statistical assessments of collocational or transitional probabilities. Riffaterre does discuss in detail the limitations of his archilecteur as a basic criterion in stylistic analysis. But he does not give explicit models explaining how the archi-reader arrives at his responses. In fact one might ask at this point whether the archi-reader consciously or unconsciously matches the emerging text with his experiences of a network of contextually related texts.

There is an obvious affinity between Riffaterre's view of units that contrast with their textual context, and the idea of de-automatized or foregrounded elements that appears in Russian formalism and Prague-

school literary structuralism. A de-automatized or foregrounded element is opposed to an automatized one precisely because it contrasts with its context.

7

It was already suggested above that the border between language and context is neither static nor impenetrable. Features that linguists once used to regard as contextual have in some instances become part and parcel of the linguistic structure itself. There are in fact texts whose student may be hard put to define the border between text proper and context. This is true for instance of recordings of spoken texts with noise reflecting situational context, or texts accompanied by illustrations and heightened by typographical devices (as in instructions, advertisements, posters). What in fact is context, what language in such messages?

Presumably each linguist would regard as language proper, not as context, all those features that are part of his linguistic structures. As they have been included in language they must be excluded from context. They offer stylistic characteristics and style markers, but not contextual variables. Even with such a principle however, there is today no full consensus on which structures are linguistic proper.

The definition of paralanguage and paralinguistics is one of the areas where different views prevail. David Crystal is one of the linguists concerned with the border between prosodic features and paralinguistic ones. Prosodic features are

> those non-segmental characteristics of speech referable to variations in pitch, loudness, duration and silence, other vocal effect being irrelevant to their identification.

whereas paralinguistic features

> may be described as combinations of physiologically grounded parameters with pitch, loudness, duration and silence being variable in relation to their identification (for example, different degrees of loudness to distinguish 'ordinary' from 'stage' whisper). (Crystal 1969: 139-140.)

Paralinguistic features have a relative lack of phonetic discreteness, says

Crystal, and they therefore go at the bottom of a scale of 'linguisticness'. Note that Crystal speaks about a scale rather than about an absolute either-or distinction. But to him, paralinguistic features are mainly phonetic in nature. Many other linguists define paralanguage much more broadly to include all "non-verbal communicating activities which accompany verbal behaviour in conversation" (Abercrombie 1968, 1972: 64). Whereas Crystal's paralinguistic parameters such as air pressure, oral aspiration, nasal friction etc. serve the production of voice qualifiers (whisper, breathy, husky, creak, falsetto, resonant) and voice qualifications (laugh, giggle, tremulousness, sob, cry), Abercrombie's broad definition would also focus on facial expression, bodily gesture and movement. Such a broad definition makes the paralinguistic envelope of an utterance merge into context of situation. A speaker's gestures and movements are obviously affected by the situational context, and kinesics (Birdwhistell 1973) thus becomes relevant to the student of context. Distance and eye contact are also among the features of the zone where paralanguage and context overlap -- a zone increasingly relevant to students of communication, semiotics and linguistics (see Laver and Hutcheson 1972 for further references).

Though paralinguistic features are definable as features excluded from the linguistic system proper, they need not be unstructured or void of semantically definable meaning. The same utterance may mean different things depending on whether it has the paralinguistic markings of a laugh or a sob: this difference is structured in the sense of giving all recipients of the message within the same linguistic and cultural group the same impression. Gestures too can be conventional and thus structured. Many of them mean different things in different cultures and communities, and may have to be learned as part of the language. When faced with features of this kind, a student of style must decide on his strategy. Either he regards such features as part of the text and as a potential source of style markers, or he defines them as part of the context and seeks correlations between them and features in the text proper.

A few random examples. The style of intimate conversation is

usually associated with a close distance between speakers, a low level of loudness, and a wide range of facial expression and gesture. The style of public oratory is usually associated with a greater distance between speaker and audience, a higher loudness level, and perhaps a more restricted range of facial expression, gesture and movement. The differences can be observed for instance when somebody imitates or parodies a public speaker in the midst of an intimate conversation. Eye contact is stylistically relevant, not only as a measure of the intimacy of a speech situation but also, in terms of absence or presence of eye contact, as a factor affecting the range of deictic reference. On the telephone, people must thus introduce and express themselves in a way that differs from face-to-face situations. They must for instance avoid exophoric gestural references: on the telephone one cannot say "The salmon I caught was this long" with the appropriate gesture. People used to face-to-face communication but not to verbal communication without eye contact may find it hard to explain their experiences verbally when they do not see their conversation partner. Striking instances of this can be observed in radio programmes where people with different educational backgrounds report their observations on strange animals, insects and plants to ask questions of a panel of experts. The ease of verbalization in such situations seems related to Bernstein's concepts of an elaborated and restricted code, and training in the use of language might therefore well include familiarizing students with the techniques of verbal description in the absenc e of face-to-face contact.

Such examples could be multiplied infinitely. If, for instance, a person is to explain the build and working of a machine, it makes a great deal of difference to his language whether the machine is present, whether he has a picture or slides of the machine, or whether he must do without such visual props. For instance deictic phrases of the type this part here and this screw would have high frequencies in a discourse demonstrating an object. The pictures and typographical layout of texts are similarly relevant. Many advertisements lose their meaning as soon as their pictures are removed or their layout altered, and it may once again be hard to decide to what extent

pictures and typography are context or content. 'To occur as a headline' for instance is a contextual feature with very decisive effects on linguistic expression.

Another area prompting decisions as to where texts end and contexts begin is the structural analysis of literature, including in particular the forms such analyses have taken in recent semiotics and neo-structuralism (for a survey of French contributions, see Style 1974, volume 8 number 1). Categories of literary structure are comparable to paralinguistic features in that the investigator must decide which of them he should regard as part of the text and as potential style markers, and which he ought to count as contextual features. The interplay between context and expression can also be studied through comparisons of different media. A look at, say, a novel together with its dramatizations for stage, radio and television can reveal further instances of links between text and context.

8

In language teaching, both of the mother tongue and of foreign languages, stylistic contexts have also come to the fore. In recent years the discussion of objectives, contents, methods and tests has increased both in precision and in volume, and the interplay between goals and language-use in context has been a focus of discussion. When languages are taught to entire populations instead of select minorities, revisions of teaching methods must be based on increasingly explicit objectives and increasingly clear hierarchies of these objectives. Communicative competence can only be assessed in definite contexts and situations. Therefore the definition of contexts and styles inevitably enters into the definition of objectives, which in turn determines contents, methods and testing. Generally, foreign-language teaching has become more context-conscious in the past several years. A general trend is to make the teaching increasingly situational and linked to concrete speech acts, with due regard to relevant ranges of language varieties and to the interaction between verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

Thus in applied linguistics too we need an apparatus to describe stylistically significant contextual features. One recent, highly elaborate taxonomy of contexts has been presented by Freihoff and Takala (1974), and it will be briefly cited here as an example of an articulate attempt to furnish language teachers with a contextual frame of reference.

Freihoff and Takala start out from the four classic subskills of language use:

	input channel	output channel
spoken channel	listening	speaking
written channel	reading	writing

To this traditional division, they add four non-linguistic channels:

	input channel	output channel
external channel	perceiving	acting
internal channel	thinking	storing in memory

They further note that bilingual activities with a linguistic output can be of four kinds: listen in order to speak in the other language, read in order to speak in the other language, read in order to write in the other language, and listen in order to write in the other language.

Next, a cross-tabulation of all these different input-output channels, the input-output interval (simultaneous v contemporaneous, short-term memory v long-term memory) and various message-processing methods yields a list of some one hundred different types of communicative tasks. A monolingual processing of a message may consist of tasks such as read and store in memory, repeat phrase by phrase, comment and expand making use of notes, and the like. Creative language use involves expression of the speaker's or writer's own thoughts or perceptions and includes tasks such as an eye-witness report in written form with comments. One category of task involves language-based physical activity such as acting while reading an instruction, or acting on the basis of recall of a previously heard message. The bilingual processing of a message comprises activities such as written translation, simultaneous oral interpretation, oral explanation of a test in the other language, and so on. Combinations of these procedures grow

increasingly elaborate, as in "the language user gives an oral commentary on a text he is reading, and then carries out an action relying on his memory".

The aim of Freihoff and Takala was to present a frame as complete as possible for the description of monolingual and bilingual communicative situations in terms of channels, input-output intervals and message-processing methods, and to classify such situations into a taxonomic code. In this code, for instance, the designation 12-P-41e indicates a successive (P) translation of a message heard in a foreign language (12) into spoken native language (41) with additional comments by the translator (e). The taxonomy is to serve practical aims as an aid towards the charting of objectives, content, methods, and testing techniques.

If the acquisition of stylistic appropriateness in a range of contexts is included among the objectives of language teaching, contextual considerations enter into testing as well. If we wish to assess the students' ability to choose expressions appropriate to specific contexts, text items must be contextualized. When tests are carried out on a large scale, contextualization may indeed tax the test-designer's ingenuity. The problem is how to indicate or create a mock context under test conditions and their constraints on economy, including space. If, for instance, we wish to test the students' ability to use colloquial speech in an everyday situation, we usually lack resources for placing each student into a realistic replica of a real-life situation. The practicable solution is to present the test item against a suitable background given in a text, on tape or with audio-visual aids. However, an extensive use of complex contextualizing devices tends to bring new elements into the test and thus to affect test validity. We may in fact not only assess the student's linguistic skills but also his social prowess in observing situations and classifying them. Even more than in simpler test types, results may be affected by the student's adjustment to test techniques and to his imaginative ability and willingness to enter into the spirit of the game. Whether this is desirable or not is for the test designer to decide.

9

In this paper, current attitudes to context have been exemplified widely. Context has been interpreted as the aggregate both of intratextual and of situational features that surround a linguistically definable unit in discourse.

Such a view may seem overcomprehensive both to those who define context in intratextual terms, and to those who prefer to observe situational contexts. Still a holistic and catholic approach has some virtues. Among other things, language variation is worth studying as a whole (Gregory 1967) if we are to avoid needless compartmentalization between disciplines such as stylistics and sociolinguistics. Also, in actual communication the border between textual and situational context is far more blurred than it may seem at first blush. In a face-to-face situation, a speaker is free to use situational references, deictic pointers, gestures and the like to contextualize his linguistic units. But were a related message expressed in writing, it would need revision where those situational features that are lost through the change of medium and channel may have to be explicitly spelled out through intratextual contextualization. Reporters and novelists are among those who must learn to translate situational context into words. In this sense, there is a certain degree of intertranslatability between textual and situational context, as one can to some extent be mapped onto the other. (The question as to how and to what extent leads us back to the debate on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.) Certain types of linguistic units must always be contextualized to be understood, but for the understanding of the message it may not matter whether the context is verbal and textual, or situational and extratextual. This depends on the medium (spoken or written), on the channel (face-to-face conversation, telephone, radio, tv, and so on), and on the circumstances that envelop the speech act. Sometimes the linguistic mechanisms of referring to intratextual and extratextual context are the same. A pronoun such as he can be used as an anaphoric pointer within a text, but also as a situational deictic pointer: "He did it pointing to one of a group of men, not he pointing at another."

In this sense, then, verbal and non-verbal contexts are part of the same semantic communicative mechanism, and it may not have been amiss to discuss both in the same paper.

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